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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU PRESIDENT OFFERS SOLUTIONS TO FARM CRISIS DURING MEETING

Canadian farm families need long-term solutions to the farm crisis, but they also need short-term transition funding this spring from the federal government, says the President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

During a meeting in Regina with federal Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl in Regina March 8, NFU President Stewart Wells advocated the federal government implement the NFU's 16-point plan to overcome the farm crisis. In the meantime, however, a meaningful program is needed to bridge the transition period until a new program that takes into account farmers' cost-of-production is implemented. "The band-aids are there, but they are not working very well," said Wells.

The Conservatives pledged to scrap the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program and bring in a new plan based on cost of production.* "When can we expect to see that plan?" Wells asked Strahl. He added that because of the massive decline in realized net farm incomes, provinces such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan are unable to afford to cost-share programs on a 60/40 basis with the federal government.

Despite increases in exports and gross farm incomes, farmers are actually earning less than they did during the 1930s, stated Wells. "The most pressing issue right now is to restore farmers' economic power in the marketplace and raise net farm incomes."

In the long term, Wells said the federal government needs to support the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) single-desk sales mechanism. It also needs to strengthen the Canadian Grain Commission's role on behalf of farmers, and show support for supply-management agencies.

Wells also called on the federal government to ban Genetic Use Restriction Technologies (GURTs), commonly referred to as "Terminator" technology. Terminator technology refers to seeds which have been genetically modified to become sterile at harvest time, so that farmers are forced to buy new seed at every planting season.

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**The Conservative Party agriculture platform, released December 21, 2005, reads in part:*

“A Conservative government will replace CAIS with a new income stabilization program that is simpler and more responsive. We will ensure that it properly addresses the cost of production, market revenue, and inventory evaluation.”

www.conservative.ca/media/20060113-Platform.pdf (see page 10 of 25)